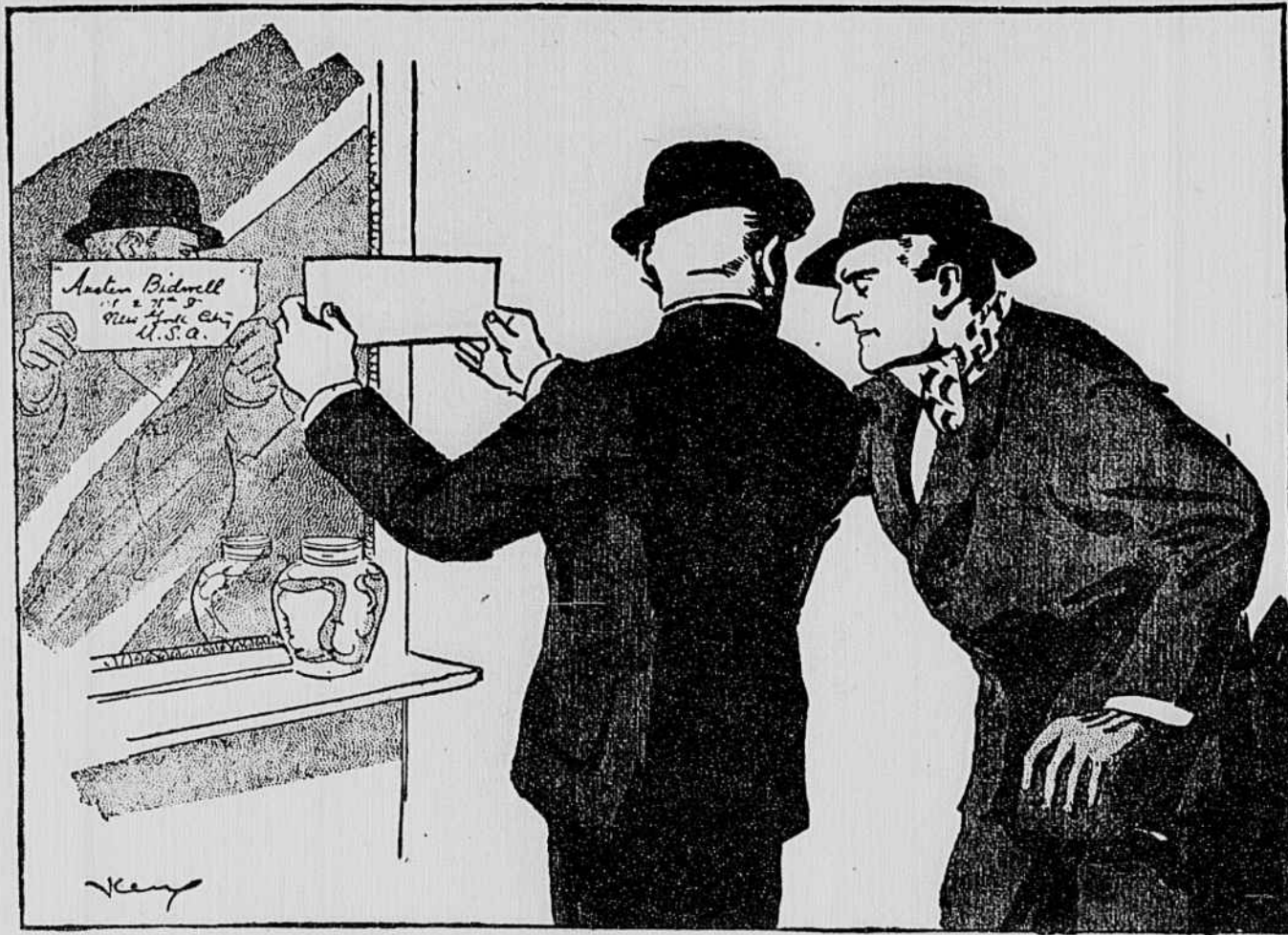


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WHY CRIME DOES NOT PAY



"Bidwell and McDonald had destroyed everything in their lodgings except a piece of blotting paper—and this proved their undoing. When the Scotland Yard detectives discovered this blotter they were able, by holding it up to a mirror, to decipher Austin Bidwell's New York address and also the impressions of several signatures which proved just the evidence needed to send the forgers to prison."

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IF there is one crime on the calendar which might be expected "to pay," forgery, on first thought, would seem to be it.

Other criminals work for returns which are more or less problematical. When the pickpocket slips his hand into your hip-pocket, he risks his liberty for a wallet which may contain little or nothing. The bag-snatcher may secure only a worthless handbag containing loose change and a few trinkets. The house-burglar takes big chances for loot which may not be worth carrying away.

This is not the case with the forger. Unlike other criminals, the forger fixes the amount of his booty himself. In this respect he is restrained only by such limitations as the circumstances may suggest. In the majority of cases, however, in making out the forged instrument, he may fill in any amount he happens to need.

Under these circumstances, forgery ought to pay. It doesn't. I have known scores of professional forgers in the course of my own criminal career and there is not a single one alive to-day who has anything to show for the years of labor he has put into his criminal career. Many of these criminals are dead. None of those left any estates. Others whom I knew in the old days are spending their declining years behind prison walls. All the others are in straitened circumstances. Some of them have resorted to less dignified forms of crime and are living the wretched existence of the underworld.

There isn't a single forger whom I knew in the old days or who has since come directly or indirectly to my attention who is worth \$50,000 to-day. And these are the fellows who have cleaned up anywhere from \$500 to \$50,000 in a single transaction.

These facts are the more significant when it is remembered that the forger is

usually a man of education, refinement and superior attainments. Many of them are college graduates. Certainly the same amount of effort and ingenuity employed by them in their criminal operations would, if legitimately used, have made them wealthy and respected citizens in their old age.

My views on this matter are in complete accord with those of criminal authorities who are in a better position to judge. William A. Pinkerton, of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, who represented the American Bankers' Association for years and in that capacity had occasion to run down thousands of professional forgers, recently declared that "forgery, like all other criminal occupations, does not pay."

"We have in the past twenty-five years had to do with the conviction of probably five hundred forgers," he said, "and to-day I do not know of a single one of them out of prison who has any money, and, like a great many other professional criminals, had they directed their talents in other directions, the majority might have been successful business men."

Bank burglars have been regarded as the aristocrats of the underworld. Forgers are the underworld's brains. For this reason they have been inclined to hold rather aloof from their fellow-criminals. Nevertheless, they come frequently in contact with each other and the ways of the forger are not very different in some respects from those of other criminals.

Perhaps the principal respect in which the forger resembles his brother criminals is the fact that, despite the great amount of talent and skill he possesses, he frequently slips up on minor details and thus comes to grief.

How big criminals fall through little things was never better illustrated than in the case of the gang of forgers headed by the Bidwell brothers, George and Aus-

tin. These criminals succeeded in hoodwinking the Bank of England out of \$300,000 and then came to grief through two trifling mistakes.

For three months the Bidwells succeeded in getting credit at the bank on forged bills of exchange, and then just when they had decided to make one final haul of \$75,000, they forgot to put the date of acceptance on one of the bills. This necessitated communication with the supposed acceptor and disclosed the fraud. Even then the Bidwells, who had carefully kept themselves in the background, might have made a successful flight, but for another oversight. In destroying all evidence which might have led to their identification at the rooms where they had been lodging, they left a small piece of blotting paper. How that piece of blotting paper brought about their arrest will appear in connection with this account of their operations.

George Bidwell and his brother, Austin, will go down into history, I suppose, as the cleverest forgers who ever victimized a bank, and yet their operations covered but a comparatively short period of time.

George was the victim of circumstances. At twenty-five he was wrongly accused of having stolen ten dollars from his employers. He was discharged in court, but the incident proved his undoing. He found it impossible to secure honest employment. He started in business on his own account several times but failed time after time. Sometimes he was victimized by people he regarded as his friends. Sometimes ordinary business reverses ruined him. However hard he tried he seemed to be able to make no headway, and then he decided to do dishonestly what he had found himself unable to do legitimately.

Bidwell had the misfortune of making bad acquaintances and he was easily led by them. He embarked in one swindling operation after another and at last he fell

Astonishing Careers of the Bidwells, Who Cheated the Bank of England Out of \$300,000, and Other Famous Forgers

into the meshes of the law. He served his first prison term when he was thirty. Escaping from a Southern jail, George Bidwell visited New York. There he met George Engle, a professional forger, and Bidwell at once commenced his real criminal career.

For several years these two worked together in this country cleaning up several thousand dollars a year on forged paper, and then, with his brother Austin and George McDonald, a Harvard graduate of criminal tendencies, went to Europe.

Bidwell had a well mapped out plan of campaign. He bought a letter of credit from a big London bank and obtained some of the bank's stationery. He then forged some letters of introduction, supposed to have been signed by the manager of the bank and mailed them to various banks throughout Europe. He also sent letters written on the London bank's stationery to himself in care of these banks.

He then proceeded to the various European capitals, asked for his mail at the banks to which he had addressed it,

needle Street" in the name of "Warren." Another account was opened in the Continental Bank. False bills of exchange for amounts averaging about \$20,000 were discounted almost daily at the Bank of England and put to the Warren account. Checks were drawn against that account and the proceeds invested in American bonds.

The success of the forgers was so great that within a few months they had amassed a fortune of \$300,000 in bonds beside several thousand dollars in cash. They decided that to continue the game indefinitely would be running unnecessary risk and a final coup calculated to net them some \$75,000 was planned.

It was this coup which proved their undoing. Through pure carelessness the clever Bidwell forgot to insert the date of the acceptance of the draft. Of course, the bank regarded it as a mere oversight, but they had to communicate with the supposed acceptor in order to have the omission supplied, and thus the forged character of the bill was discovered. Very



Sophie Lyons.

and a "presenter." The proceeds are divided in certain proportions, the presenter often getting the lion's share, because it is he who takes the greatest risk.

"Steve" Broadwell is said to have realized nearly three-quarters of a million dollars as his share of the forgeries in which he was implicated. There was hardly a city in the country in which he had not operated at one time or another. His method was unique.

Here is a typical case. He walked into a Boston bank one rainy afternoon just before the hour for closing. He presented a draft drawn by a Southern bank upon a bank in New York directing the New York bank to pay to James Lane some \$2,000.

Broadwell was soaking wet from the rain, and as he handed the draft to the paying teller he commenced a fit of coughing which seemed as though it would split him apart. The teller waited until the coughing man had a moment's respite and then explained that he couldn't cash the draft because it was drawn on a New York bank.

Again the man started his terrible cough and the perspiration stood out on his brow. When the spell subsided, he handed the draft back to the cashier and insisted in a weak voice that the cashier of the Southern bank, whose signature guaranteed James Lane's endorsement was on the back of the draft, had told him that he could cash the draft as well at the Boston bank as in New York.

"I was on my way to New York to see a specialist," he went on, "but I'm afraid I'll never get any further than this town. That's why I came here."

The coughing started again. The teller became alarmed. It didn't seem as if the man's racked frame could much longer resist the terrific strain his coughing spells were subjecting it to. The man grew deathly pale and seemed about to collapse. One of the officials of the bank, attracted by the noise of the man's paroxysms, appeared on the scene just in time to catch him as he was falling to the floor.

A chair was brought and while the exhausted man was assisted into it the teller and the other officials discussed the question of cashing the draft he had presented.

The man's terrible condition completely disarmed them of suspicion as to the authenticity of the draft he had presented and the only thing which made them hesitate was the irregularity of the proceeding. Banks and bank officials are the last to move out of the regular rut. Repeated experiences have taught them that safety lies in following precedent.

It seemed that the Boston bank had carried a large deposit of the New York bank's funds, and could, of course, safely have cashed the draft if so inclined, a fact with which Broadwell was, of course, familiar. Again the man commenced his deadly cough, and the teller, after consulting with the cashier and fearing that further argument with the apparently dying man might bring about his death, finally counted out the money and handed it to him. Broadwell went out into the rain again, worked the same trick at four other banks before three o'clock that afternoon and cleaned up some eighteen thousand dollars on the day!

The drafts he used in this way were genuine drafts issued for small amounts in the regular way and skillfully raised to several hundred times their actual amount. In the case mentioned the original amount was \$20. Broadwell collected \$2,000 on it. Broadwell died in a Bowery lodging house. He had made fortunes in his time, but he died a pauper. The strain he experienced in executing his ingenious fraud undoubtedly hastened his end. He was a most finished actor and would have adorned the stage. But he chose a life of crime and he reaped the criminal's inevitable reward—misery and poverty.

George Wilkes himself, who at one time or another worked with most of the big forgers of his time and cleaned up hundreds of thousands of dollars in this country and in Europe, died penniless in the Bellevue Hospital in New York City.

The accomplices of the actual forgers become involved in the meshes of the law more frequently than the principals themselves. Thus, William Pinkerton has pointed out that eight of the associates of Charles Becker, the forger, were caught and sent to prison, and the same fate befell ten of George Wilkes' associates, five of Jack Brush's, six of Jim Farrell's and eight of Alonzo J. Whiteman's.

No one who is at all familiar with the careers of the big forgers will ever contend that forgery pays. On the contrary, like every other crime, it has never brought anyone any real happiness. For a few years, perhaps, it may enable those who pursue it as a means of livelihood to live well, but in the long run the life of the forger is full of wretchedness and misery. Forgery does not pay because no crime pays.

SOPHIE LYONS, /



"The coughing started again. The teller became alarmed. It seemed as if the man's racked frame could not much longer resist the terrific strain his coughing spells were subjecting it to. One of the officials of the bank appeared on the scene just in time to catch him as he was falling to the floor. The man's terrible condition completely disarmed them of suspicion, and the draft he had presented was paid. It called for \$2,000. It had been raised from \$20."

presented his forged letters of introduction and easily succeeded in getting the banks to cash the forged checks and drafts he presented to them.

In this way he cleaned up hundreds of thousands of dollars. The gang had not been operating long in Europe before they discovered that the Bank of England might prove an easy victim. An account was opened with "The Old Lady of Thread-

cleverly the bank kept its discovery to itself, and when Noyes, one of the members of the gang who had been used to do the actual presenting of the drafts, appeared at the Continental Bank to draw some of the gang's money he was arrested. Word reached Bidwell at his aristocratic quarters, in the West End of London, that the game was up and he and McDonald, who boarded with him, at once set to work to destroy all incriminating evidence. Not an iota of evidence apparently was left to identify them or to characterize the work in which they had been engaged. Every label was carefully cut out of their clothes and other belongings, all papers were burned and, of course, the engraving blocks were thoroughly destroyed.

While the work of destruction was going on, McDonald wrote a letter to Austin Bidwell in New York, whence he had fled, and he asked George to save a piece of blotting-paper so that he might blot the letter when he got through.

Some days later when the detectives from Scotland Yard had so far followed the forgers' trail that they came to the abandoned quarters of Bidwell and McDonald, they ran across that piece of blotting-paper. Holding it up to a mirror they were able to decipher Austin Bidwell's New York address. This piece of blotting-paper also contained impressions of some of the forged signatures themselves and proved one of the principal links in the chain of evidence which the Government was able to present against the forgers.

All four were convicted and sent to prison. George served some fourteen years and worked for five years in an effort to secure his brother Austin's release, which he then succeeded in doing. The two brothers went West. Austin died poverty-stricken a few years later. George delivered a lecture in an effort to raise enough money to bury his brother! A few weeks later George himself died.

George Bidwell had cleaned up over a million dollars in the course of his comparatively short criminal career, but after years of suffering and privation he died a pauper. In all the history of crime there never was a better example of the futility of a life of crime than this.

But there are many others. There was "Steve" Broadwell, referred to so often as "the man with the cough." He was a member of the notorious Wilkes gang of forgers. George Wilkes, regarded as the most expert freehand forger of his time, was the penman of the gang, and Broadwell was one of the "presenters." Every gang of forgers consists of a capitalist or backer, an actual forger, known as the "penman" or "scratcher," a middleman, who acts as the forger's representative,

The New Plan to Encourage Love-Making

By Thomas S. McQuaide,

Pittsburgh's Superintendent of Police.

WHY should not the course of true love run smooth? Why should spooning be interfered with? If all the world loves lovers why should they be forced to do their spooning, their love-making under cover? It is the business of any city to see that lovers are given a place to spoon in. And because I was once a lover I am determined that for once the young people of Pittsburgh shall be given every opportunity to spoon to their heart's content.

And where else should they spoon, where else should they kiss but in the public parks? Our parks will be transformed every evening into spoonholders where the true lovers can talk their sweet nothings, can embrace each other, and do all the airy trifling lovelinesses that comprise a courtship. But, of course, it is necessary that true lovers be distinguished from the masquerade. The former shall not only be welcomed, but encouraged to spoon. The latter will be given a free ride in a police wagon.

It's love that makes the world go round, and it is spooning, that is, lovemaking, that is the greater part of love. And young people should be made to feel that they are doing nothing to be ashamed of when they frankly spoon.

The more open lovemaking there is under the carefully careful eye of a chaperon, the less secret vice there is apt to be.

What harm is there in a young couple going into the park of an afternoon or evening, seating themselves on a bench and spooning? What if the young fellow does put his arm around the girl's waist, or even if he embraces and kisses her? There is no wrong in that. Then why should they be driven out of the park, or perhaps arrested, for doing something that the magistrate and the chief of police and everybody else did when they were young, and do still, too?

As I understand it, the parks are the playgrounds of the people—mostly the common people who haven't the means to provide for themselves the expensive amusements of the wealthy. The parks should be made as attractive as possible, especially to the young people. For if you provide decent,

clean amusement for your boys and girls they are not nearly so likely to go wrong.

Our park policemen have been instructed to use their discretion in determining between true lovers and masqueraders. We have twenty-five old, experienced



"Policemen must wink to themselves and look the other way when they hear the sound of a kiss between true lovers."

park men, who have been there for years. They know the difference between a true lover and a masquerader every time. These men were young once themselves and they have not forgotten the days of their own spooning. They have been told that they are to let the decent lovers alone, that when they hear the sound that may reasonably lead them to suppose that someone has been kissed, they are to look out of the corner of their eye to see whether the man in the case is the right sort. If he is, then the police chaperon is to pass on and the lovers may go on with the good work.

Of course, we take precautions, but we try not to

have them too apparent. All our benches are along the roadways and not far away from light. All our parks are well lighted. A bashful lover may be as averse to kissing in the open as the masquerader, but he soon gets over this state of mind when he sees everybody's doing it, too!

No man will be allowed to spoon with a different girl every night, nor will he be allowed to enter the park with one girl and leave with another.

How do our men tell whether true lovers or masqueraders are doing the hugging and kissing? Why, in this way. Take Schenley Park, for instance. There are three entrances to it. At each entrance are stationed policemen, trained, experienced men. Those fellows can tell almost at a glance whether a young man is bringing his regular girl to the park or whether he is the sort that brings in a different one each evening. The masquerader is turned away from the entrance and is not permitted to enter. If he does get through, the policemen watching the benches will get him. If that sort is caught misbehaving, they are bundled out of the park in one of the police automobiles and are fined in the morning. Repetition means jail sentences and work-house terms.

No, I haven't issued any instructions to the park policemen as to what sort of love talk is permissible. That is left to their discretion. Lovers all say things that sound silly to the eavesdropper, but we allow for that. Silliness is not a sin.

Roughly speaking, my rules are three in number, as follows:

Rule 1—No man will be permitted to bring a different girl to the park each night.

Rule 2—Policemen must wink to themselves and look the other way when they hear the sound of a kiss between true lovers.

Rule 3—The girl who does not want to be kissed must do more than say faintly, "Please don't." What about the girl who fusses and says that she doesn't want to be kissed? Well that is a delicate problem, but our men are told to go slow and be sure that the girl means it before they interfere. You know girls have that habit, and yet when the man refrains from the kiss they get mad.

I firmly believe that our liberal attitude toward spooners will do much to improve the morals of the young people of this city. I have a great sympathy with lovers, and this year determined that all bars should be let down and that they should go as far as they like within reasonable bounds of decency. Spooning is the birthright of the young. I am with the spooners heart and soul.